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LETTER DATED 30 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith for the information of the members of the Security Council, a communiqué dated 30 January 1997 from the Government of the Republic of Uganda, concerning allegations by Zaire and diverse international media against Uganda. I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mathias M. SEMAKULA KIWANUKA
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Communiqué dated 30 January 1997 from the Government of Uganda concerning allegations by Zaire and diverse international media against Uganda

1. The Government of the Republic of Uganda wishes to refer to the situation in eastern Zaire and to the accusations from some circles in the Government of Zaire and the international community that Uganda is involved in eastern Zaire.

2. The Government of Uganda wishes to make it absolutely clear to the Government of Zaire and the international community that these allegations are false and baseless. The developments in eastern Zaire are internal problems, and Zaire should address them by identifying the root causes of the armed conflict rather than using Uganda as a scapegoat. Some of the causes are related to the following:

(a) After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the defeated Rwandan soldiers and the Interahamwe camped along the Zaire-Rwanda border with all the military hardware they carried from Rwanda. In the resolution passed by the Cairo and Tunis summit meetings on the Great Lakes region on 28 and 29 November 1995 and from 16 to 18 March 1996, respectively, President Mobutu undertook to disarm these groups and to move them away from the common border to places acceptable under international law and United Nations conventions. This was never done;

(b) Within Zaire, the Interahamwe exported the policy of genocide into eastern Zaire, and have been directly linked to policies of execution and massacres in Masisi and Rutshuru in the Uvila region;

(c) For two years, Zaire continued to harbour armed elements which, in addition to the internal incursions mentioned above, regularly launched cross-border attacks against Rwanda, causing a perpetual threat to international peace and security in the region;

(d) The disenfranchisement of Zairian citizens (Banyamulenge) who had been living in Zaire for 200 years through a law enacted in 1981 resulted in discord among the Banyamulenge in Zaire. It finally exploded when the Governor of North Kivu issued an expulsion order against them;

(e) The internal dissident groups in Zaire, which have been in existence for over 30 years, for example Lumumbist secessionist struggles, the Tshombe group, Mulele groups, etc., took advantage of the fluid situation in eastern Zaire and took up arms. We urge the Government of Zaire and the international community not lose sight of these facts.

3. Shortly after the recent rebellion in Zaire, Ugandan dissidents, who had been living in Zaire with the full knowledge of the Zairian authorities, also took advantage of the prevailing situation and violated Ugandan territory from within Zaire. The Uganda Peoples Defence Forces assumed its Constitutional responsibility of defending Uganda and flushed the enemy out of Ugandan territory.

4. The Government of Uganda recognizes the inalienable rights of all people within the internationally recognized territorial boundaries as stipulated in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter on Human and People's Rights and other international conventions relevant to the right of citizenship and nationality.

5. Uganda reaffirms and respects the territorial integrity of Zaire in accordance with the OAU Charter and the Cairo Declaration of 1964 on the territorial integrity and inviolability of national boundaries inherited at independence and calls for non-intervention and an end to cross-border incursions.

6. Zaire has also accused Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, as sponsors of the Banyamulenge rebels who have expelled central Government functionaries from a section of eastern Zaire, thus sparking off the current crisis that threatens the peace and security of the Great Lakes region. This accusation, insofar as it related to Uganda, is false and diversionary. Uganda's foreign policy is grounded on respect for the sovereignty of other countries. We abide by the Charter of the United Nations regarding this clause and have never sponsored any organization or tribe to cause chaos in a neighbouring country. We strongly believe in good-neighbourliness and remain committed to working closely with countries of the region and the rest of the international community to seek peaceful ways and means of resolving problems in the region. It was in this regard that Uganda offered a base to the multinational force established by the Security Council in its resolution 1080 (1996) of 15 November 1996 to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those refugees who were stranded in eastern Zaire.

7. President Museveni has been in regular contact with President Mobutu exploring ways in which Uganda could contribute to efforts that would bring about stability. We do not support the break up of Zaire. We wish therefore to reassure the international community at large that we have no soldiers involved with the current problem in eastern Zaire. We firmly believe in and have been working for regional cooperation as a way to promote peace and development. We are party to and bound by the resolutions of the regional summits of heads of State on eastern Zaire, held at Nairobi. There is no way Uganda could at the same time be a contributing factor to instability and insecurity in the region.